



E-NEWS from *Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn*

An electronic legislative update for May 11, 2002

Did you know...



Kyrgyzstan (in light pink) is located 400 miles north of the Afghanistan border and has been a strong US ally in the war against terrorism. Currently, 3000 US troops are stationed in Kyrgyzstan.

Congresswoman Dunn met this week with the First Lady of Kyrgyzstan, Dr. Miriam Akaeva. Dr. Akaeva came to Dunn's office to discuss trade issues. The two became acquainted when Dunn traveled to the region several years ago.

Kyrgyzstan is a former Soviet Republic and has been very supportive of US efforts in the battle against terrorism, providing both access to airports and military bases and to intelligence information.

Jennifer's legislation to create a free trade agreement With Kyrgyzstan will open new markets for Washington State products.

What is going on this week?

HOUSE REJECTED BILL DISAPPROVING OF THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS REGARDING STEEL IMPORTS

The US House rejected a bill that disapproves of the President's steel import decision. In his efforts to help the ailing US steel industry and protect it from illegal dumping, last March, the President proposed imposing a 30 percent tariff for three years on steel imports from countries that are not developing nations and those that do not trade with the US under the provisions of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA). Because of illegal steel dumping, 33 US steel companies have either gone out of business or filed for bankruptcy. As an alternative, the International Trade Commission proposed a less flexible plan which would impose a 20 percent, four-year tariff that would not exclude our NAFTA trading partners. Passage of this measure would cause the less flexible, ITC proposal to be implemented. Those who support expanded trade, including Congresswoman Dunn, preferred the President's less burdensome plan and therefore voted against the measure.

HOUSE REAUTHORIZES DOLLARS FOR NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION

The House voted to reauthorize the North American Wetlands Conservation Act at \$50 million in fiscal year 2002 and an additional \$5 million in each subsequent year up to \$75 million in fiscal year 2007. The majority of the funds will be spent on cooperative public-private wetlands conservation efforts throughout North America. The bill specifies that 25-30 percent will be spent on projects within Canada and Mexico. Wetlands serve as natural flood control basins and water filters while providing critical habitat for numerous species of fish and wildlife. Within the last 30 years, many programs to reduce wetland loss have been created.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN REPOSITIORY SITE APPROVAL ACT PASSED BY THE US HOUSE

The House passed a bill to approve the development of a repository for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, in accordance with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. Currently, about 45,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel is stored at 72 sites throughout the country. It is estimated that by 2010, the amount of spent nuclear fuel will reach 60,000 metric tons. This proposal would create a single location for long-term storage and would be overseen by the US Department of Energy.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT PASSED BY THE HOUSE

The fiscal year 2003 defense authorization bill was approved by the US House earlier this week. The bill would authorize \$383.4 billion for the US Department of Defense, Counter terrorism Programs, Ballistic Missile Defense, supporting US military personnel (a 4.1 percent military pay raise and military construction projects), research and development and military readiness activities, to name a few.

What we did last week:

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACTION TEAM MEMBERS NAMED

Last week, House Speaker Dennis Hastert held a large press rally at the Capitol to name Members of the new "Prescription Drug Action Team." Congresswoman Dunn is among the team's members. The team will be tasked with writing legislation to provide affordable prescription drugs for all seniors.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ISRAEL

The US House overwhelmingly voted in support of a resolution supporting Israel and its right to defend herself from terrorism. (Dunn voted in support of the measure.) It expresses solidarity with Israel in its fight against terrorism and commends the President for his leadership in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

HOUSE REAUTHORIZES FUNDING FOR EXPORT-IMPORT BANK THROUGH 2005

With Jennifer's support, the House passed a bill to reauthorize funding for the Export-Import Bank. The mission of the Export-Import Bank is to support export financing to nations which wish to purchase US goods. It is designed to match competition from foreign export credit agencies and is intended only to fill gaps in commercially available financing for US exports by serving as a "lender of last resort." (It does not compete with private lenders.) Among the organization's financed exports are US Civilian Aircraft (Boeing) electronics and medical equipment.

HOUSE PASSES FARM SECURITY ACT OF 2002 ('FARM BILL')

The US House passed a bill providing federal farm subsidies costing \$180 billion over 10 years. Subsidies, in the form of direct payments and loans, will be distributed to farmers of a long list of commodities including: corn, dairy, peanuts, sugar, honey, wheat, cotton, oats etc. Dunn voted against the farm bill arguing that it is too expensive, would be of most benefit to large corporate farms (not family-owned farms) and reverses the efforts of Congress a few years ago that encourages free market pricing for commodities. This bill was the final version of the farm bill and is expected to be signed into law by the President.

Summary of Press Releases

HOUSE PANEL CONSIDERS US REP JENNIFER DUNN'S BILL DEALING WITH EVERGREEN FOREST TRUST SNOQUALMIE LAND ACQUISITION; *Dunn Testifies Before Ways and Means Panel*

Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn testified before the Ways and Means Select Revenue Subcommittee in support of her legislation that would allow non-profit organizations access to tax-free bonds to finance land purchased for conservation. HR 1711, the 'Community Forestry and Agriculture Conservation Act,' would allow the Evergreen Forest Trust in Washington State to purchase from Weyerhaeuser 104,000 acres to protect it from future development and urban sprawl. HR 1711 would also permit similar land acquisitions in other areas in the nation.

During her testimony, Congresswoman Dunn said, "*One of our most important roles as elected officials is to serve as stewards of our environment. We have a responsibility to future generations to care for our environment so that they will be able to experience and enjoy our natural resources.*"

The acquisition of land by the Evergreen Forest Trust from Weyerhaeuser is an innovative conservation approach which brings together environmentalists and willing sellers. Previously, large amounts of money would be spent on litigation to in efforts to halt urban sprawl.